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SUBJECT: MEDIA REACTION REPORT -
PARIS - FRIDAY, JULY 01, 2005

(A) SUBJECTS COVERED IN TODAY'S REPORT:

IRAQ - BUSH SPEECH
IRAN

B) SUMMARY OF COVERAGE:

DOMESTIC AND EUROPEAN STORIES ARE PROMINENTLY FEATURED ON
TODAY'S FRONT PAGES, WITH THE UK TAKING OVER THE EU PRESIDENCY
AND PM DE VILLEPIN HAVING GIVEN YESTERDAY A PRESS CONFERENCE
ON HIS FIRST THIRTY DAYS IN OFFICE.

"BLAIR TAKES COMMAND OF EUROPE" HEADLINES LE FIGARO, ADDING:
"GREAT BRITAIN INHERITS A WEAKENED EUROPE, IN THE GRIPS OF AN
EXISTENTIAL CRISIS, AND UNHINDERED BY THE HEGEMONY OF THE
FRANCO-GERMAN COUPLE." LAURE MANDEVILLE WRITES: "THE NEW
EASTERN EUROPEAN MEMBERS HAVE FALLEN UNDER THE CHARM OF TONY
BLAIR. THEY SHARE HIS POSITION ON NATO AND ON RELATIONS WITH
THE U.S. AS THE KEY TO EUROPEAN SECURITY." FOR FRANCE SOIR,
BLAIR IS "THE MASTER OF EUROPE." "BLAIR HAS A FREE HAND TO
REMODEL EUROPE TO HIS TASTE. HE WILL BENEFIT FROM THE WEAKENED
CHIRAC-SCHROEDER TANDEM."

AN OP-ED ON FRANCE AND THE EU REFERENDUM IN LE FIGARO BY
SYLVIE GOULARD OF CERI COMMENTS: "SAYING TO THE FRENCH THAT
THEY WILL BE ABLE TO DURABLY ENJOY THE ADVANTAGES OF EUROPEAN
INTEGRATION WITHOUT THEM HAVING TO ADAPT IS AN ILLUSION. THE
EU PROJECT DEMANDS CHANGES. WHAT IS FRANCE READY TO DO FOR
EUROPE? IF THE U.S. REJECTS GERMANY AS A USNC MEMBER, OUR
IMMEDIATE RESPONSE SHOULD BE SHARING OUR PERMANENT SEAT WITH
GERMANY TO SERVE THE EU'S COMMON FOREIGN POLICY."

IRAN AND AHMADINEJAD'S ELECTION CONTINUE TO ELICIT COMMENTARY.
ANTOINE BASBOUS OF THE OBSERVATORY FOR ARAB COUNTRIES PENS AN
OP-ED IN LE FIGARO AND CONCLUDES THAT "THE ELECTION OF
AHMADINEJAD MARKS THE RADICALIZATION OF A KOMEYNI-STYLE
REGIME." (SEE PART C)

IN RIGHT-OF-CENTER LES ECHOS SENIOR EDITORIALIST JACQUES
HUBERT-RODIER PENS A COMMENTARY ON IRAQ, "PULL OUT OR
RETREAT?" (SEE PART C)

LEFT-OF-CENTER LIBERATION DEVOTES A FULL-PAGE ACCOUNT TO
BERLUSCONI'S "EMBARRASSMENT" OVER THE ALLEGED KIDNAPPING OF
IMAM ABU AMAR BY CIA OPERATIVES: "THE U.S. AMBASSADOR TO ROME
WAS SUMMONED BY BERLUSCONI TO 'CLARIFY THE SITUATION.' THE
AFFAIR IS BECOMING INCREASINGLY PROBLEMATIC FOR THE ITALIAN
GOVERNMENT, ONE OF THE STAUNCHEST SUPPORTERS OF PRESIDENT BUSH
AND HIS ANTI-TERRORIST CRUSADE. FOR THE FIRST TIME, THE
JUDICIAL ARM OF AN ALLIED COUNTRY IS OFFICIALLY ASKING
WASHINGTON TO ACCOUNT FOR THE KIDNAPPING OF INDIVIDUALS WITH
TIES TO ISLAMIC GROUPS."

CATHOLIC LA CROIX DEVOTES ITS LEAD TO TODAY'S "WORLDWIDE
MOBILIZATION FOR AFRICA" AS NGO'S CALL TO ERADICATE POVERTY
AND RESPECT THE OBJECTIVES SET BY THE MILLENNIUM ACCOUNT LESS
THAN A WEEK BEFORE THE START OF THE G-8.

(C) SUPPORTING TEXT/BLOCK QUOTES:

IRAQ - BUSH SPEECH

"PULLOUT OR RETREAT FROM IRAQ?"

JACQUES HUBERT-RODIER IN RIGHT-OF-CENTER LES ECHOS (07/01):
"IRAQ IS ON THE BRINK OF A CIVIL WAR. CONSIDERING THE RISKS
FOR THE REGION'S STABILITY, ONE MIGHT HAVE EXPECTED A NEW
VISION. WHICH THE U.S. PRESIDENT DID NOT PROVIDE. NO ONE WANTS
CHAOS OR A CIVIL WAR IN IRAQ. THE QUESTION TODAY IS HOW TO
STABILIZE IRAQ AND THROUGH WHICH MEANS. AND THIS IS EXACTLY
THE QUESTION TO WHICH PRESIDENT BUSH DID NOT BRING AN ANSWER.
HE REJECTED THE POSSIBILITY OF A PROGRESSIVE PULLOUT CALENDAR.
THIS POSITION MAKES EVEN MORE DIFFICULT THE RETURN TO FULL
IRAQI SOVEREIGNTY. IF GEORGE BUSH DOES NOT BEGIN TO PLAN FOR A
PROGRESSIVE PULLOUT FROM IRAQ HIS SOLDIERS COULD WELL BE STUCK
IN THE IRAQI QUAGMIRE. AN EXIT STRATEGY WOULD REQUIRE THAT
OTHER COUNTRIES SEND TROOPS AND/OR RE-ENFORCE THEIR MILITARY
PRESENCE. A DIFFICULT PROSPECT WHEN IN FACT THE TREND IS

EXACTLY THE OPPOSITE."

IRAN

"A RETURN TO RADICAL KHOMEYNISM"

ANTOINE BASBOUS OF THE OBSERVATORY FOR ARAB COUNTRIES IN RIGHT-OF-CENTER LE FIGARO (07/01): "AHMADINEJAD WAS ABLE TO CHARM IRAN'S ISLAMIC AND POPULAR ELECTORATE. IN THE SHORT TERM, ONE CANNOT EXPECT AN IMPROVEMENT IN RELATIONS WITH WASHINGTON. TEHRAN COULD BE TEMPTED TO ATTRACT AND FAVOR EUROPEAN ECONOMIC INTERESTS IN ORDER TO UNDERMINE U.S. INTERESTS AND DIVIDE THE WEST. BUT IRAN IS INCREASINGLY TURNING TOWARDS INDIA AND CHINA. HOPING TO BENEFIT FROM A CHINESE VETO AT THE UNSC IN CASE OF A DEMAND FOR SANCTIONS. THE NEO-CONSERVATIVES FROM WASHINGTON AND TEHRAN HAVE LITTLE CHANCE OF GETTING TOGETHER. EACH TEAM MISTRUSTS THE OTHER. WASHINGTON HAS NEITHER FORGOTTEN NOR FORGIVEN THE HOSTAGE TAKING IN 1979. AND THE IRANIANS HAVE A LONG LIST OF GRIEVANCES AGAINST THE AMERICANS. THE FRACTURE LINE IS LONG, EXTENDING FROM IRAQ TO AFGHANISTAN, AND FROM TERRORISM TO PROLIFERATION. ON THIS LAST POINT, AMERICANS AND EUROPEANS OFTEN SHARE THE SAME ANALYSIS AND INTERESTS. BUT BECAUSE THIS IS AN ISSUE DEAR TO THE RELIGIOUS GUIDE OF THE REPUBLIC, NO MAJOR CHANGES ARE EXPECTED. THE 'NEW' IRAN'S REGIONAL POLICY WILL BRING RENEWED SUPPORT TO THE RADICALS, WITH LEBANON'S HEZBOLLAH ALREADY REJOICING. BUT IN IRAN AS ELSEWHERE, CAMPAIGN PROMISES NEED TO BE INTERPRETED WITH CAUTION. CHANCES ARE THAT ECONOMIC AND INTERNATIONAL REALISM WILL DICTATE A LESS DOCTRINAL AND IDEOLOGICAL STANCE IN IRAN. STILL, AHMADINEJAD'S POLITICAL PROMOTION SIGNALS A MORE HARD-LINE APPROACH BY THE REGIME AND A RETURN TO RADICAL KHOMEYNISM. IN PREPARATION FOR A CONFRONTATION WITH IRAN'S 'NEW AMERICAN NEIGHBOR.' TEHRAN IS DEVELOPING THE 'COMPLEX OF THE BESIEGED,' EVEN THOUGH THE AMERICAN 'TIGER' IS WEAKENED - BUT NOT BEATEN - BY THE WAR IN IRAQ." STAPLETON